

News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE PRIVATE STEWARDSHIP GRANTS PROGRAM

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it is seeking proposals for private lands conservation funding through its Private Stewardship Grants Program. About \$6.5 million is available FY 2005 through this grant program to support on-the-ground conservation efforts on private lands.

As envisioned by President Bush, this program provides Federal grants on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in voluntary conservation efforts on private lands that benefit imperiled species including federally listed endangered or threatened species as well as proposed, candidate and other at-risk species. Landowners and their partners may submit proposals directly to the Service for funding to support those efforts.

In August 2004, the Service awarded 97 grants totaling more than \$7 million to individuals and groups to undertake conservation projects for endangered, threatened and other at-risk species on private lands in 39 states. The following are examples of how these grants support private conservation efforts and foster the development of voluntary partnerships:

A diverse partnership of organizations in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York received a grant of \$55,522 to support local efforts to recover, enhance and restore bog turtle habitat on private lands. Woody and invasive plants have taken over much of the habitat needed for turtle conservation.

Private lands habitat enhancement in Colorado and South Dakota (\$114,675) will restore shortgrass prairie rangelands to benefit grassland and riparian species at risk, principally declining grassland birds. Six individual projects were awarded a total of \$114,675 to support their various management plans that include reseeding cropland to native prairie, removing invasive species, and altering livestock grazing management.

Several private landowners adjacent to the Rock River in southwest Minnesota will use their \$30,000 to work together to restore Topeka shiner habitat by protecting and maintaining the river bank, off channel areas, and adjacent upland fields to reduce erosion and sedimentation into the river and off-channel habitats that are important to this fish.

For more information regarding this grant opportunity and on how and where to submit proposals, please visit the Service's Private Stewardship Grants Website at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html. The Private Stewardship Grants Program is identified in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance as number 15.632.

You may also contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Branch of State Grants, Endangered Species Program, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 Phone: (703) 358-2061.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million- acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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